

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf
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Daily Daf

Mishna

If a non-kosher fish swallowed a kosher fish, it is permitted to be eaten. But if a kosher fish has swallowed a non-kosher fish, the non-kosher fish is forbidden to be eaten. This is because it is not the product of the fish (*for the non-kosher fish was swallowed alive; but if it was actually a growth of the kosher fish, it would be permitted, as is the ruling with something which is a product from something kosher*). (7b)

Swallowed Fish

The *Gemora* asks: The reason (*that the swallowed fish may be eaten*) is because we actually saw that it swallowed, but if we did not see that it was swallowed, we would say that it was spawned by the non-kosher fish (*and it would be prohibited as being part of the non-kosher fish*). From where do we know this (*that there is such a concern*)? It has been taught in a *braisa*: A non-kosher fish have fetuses (*they spawn their young*), while kosher fish lay eggs. If this is a fact, even if we see that it actually swallowed, we should say that the kosher fish had been digested, and the fish found inside was spawned by the non-kosher fish?

Rav Sheishes said: The *Mishna* is referring to a case where he found it in the fecal channel (*and if it were an embryo, it should have been found in the womb*).

Rav Pappa said: The *Mishna* is referring to a case where he found it in the throat.

Rav Nachman said: The *Mishna* is referring to a case where he found it complete (*as a developed adult*).

Rav Ashi said: The majority of fish breed their own kind and therefore (*when we discover a different kind of fish inside*) it is as if we had witnessed ourselves the swallowing. (7b – 8a)

Gestation Period

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: A non-kosher fish have fetuses (*they spawn their young*), while kosher fish lay eggs. Any creature that gives birth (*with real fetuses*) suckles their young, and any creature that lays eggs, sustains its young by gathering food for it, except the bat - for although it lays eggs, it suckles its young.

The *braisa* continues: Dolphins reproduce from human beings. [*Rashi understands this to mean that a human can impregnate them.*] What are dolphins? Rav Yehudah said: Sons of the sea (*which, Rashi explains, are marine animals that are half-human and half-fish, similar to a mermaid*).

The *braisa* continues: In any species which has its testicles outside, the female gives birth to its young, but where the testicles are inside, the female lays eggs.

The *Gemora* asks: Is this so? But Shmuel said that geese and wild geese are *kilayim* (*they cannot be crossbred*), and when we inquired as to the reason, Abaye said: The testicles of wild geese are recognizable from the outside, while those of

regular geese are only recognizable from the inside. Yet (we know) they both lay eggs!?

Rather, the *Gemora* emends the *braisa* to say: In any species which has its male organ outside, the female gives birth to its young, but where the male organ is inside, the female lays eggs.

The *braisa* continues: Any creature that cohabitates by day will bear offspring by day. Any creature that cohabitates at night will bear offspring by night. Any creature that cohabitates by day or by night will bear offspring either by day or by night. An example of a creature that cohabitates by day and bears offspring by day is the chicken. A creature that cohabitates by night and bears offspring by night is the bat. A creature that cohabitates by day and by night and bears offspring by day or by night is man and any creature similar to man.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the practical *halachic* difference (that can be derived from these statements)?

The *Gemora* answers: It is necessary for the ruling of Rav Mari the son of Rav Kahana, for he said: If one checked a nest of chickens on the eve of a Festival and did not find an egg inside of it, and on the morrow, he rose early (before dawn) and found an egg there, it is permitted to be eaten on the festival. [For since the *braisa* taught us that a chicken does not lay eggs at night, it must have been laid on the previous day. An egg, newly laid on a festival is forbidden on that day.]

The *Gemora* asks: But did he not check beforehand?

The *Gemora* answers: He did not check thoroughly.

The *Gemora* asks: But he did check thoroughly?

The *Gemora* answers: We refer to a case where the greater part of the egg emerged from the intestines of the chicken (before the festival) but returned, and this is in accordance with the ruling of Rabbi Yochanan, for Rabbi Yochanan said: An egg, the greater part of which emerged (from the intestines of a chicken) on the eve of a festival and returned, may be eaten on the festival.

The *braisa* continues: All animals whose (manner of) copulating and (length of) gestation are alike, can give birth from one another, and nurse each other's young. All animals copulate with their faces facing the back (of the female),

except three, which copulate face to face. These are: fish, man, and a snake.

The *Gemora* asks: And why are these three different?

The *Gemora* answers: When Rav Dimi came (from Eretz Yisroel) he said: In the West it was said: It is because the Divine Presence spoke with them.

It was taught in a *braisa*: Camels copulate back to back.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: A chicken lays its eggs after twenty-one days (after pregnancy, the egg takes this period for completion; another explanation is that it hatches its eggs for a period of twenty-one days before the young ones emerge), and corresponding to it among trees is the *luz*-tree (hazelnut or almond). A dog is born after a gestation period of fifty days, and corresponding to it among trees is a fig tree (where they develop in fifty days). A cat is born after a gestation period of fifty-two days, and corresponding to it among trees is a mulberry tree (whose fruit ripens fifty-two days after its blossoming). A pig is born after a gestation period of sixty days, and corresponding to it among trees is an apple tree. A fox and many kinds of reptiles are born after a gestation period of six months, and corresponding to it among trees is wheat (in accordance with the opinion who maintains that the tree from which Adam ate from was wheat). Small kosher animals give birth after five months, and corresponding to them among trees is a vine. Large non-kosher animals give birth after twelve months, and corresponding to them among trees is a palm-tree. Kosher large animals give birth after nine months, and corresponding to them among trees is an olive tree. The wolf, lion, bear, leopard, *bardeles* (a spotted animal, such as a hyena, leopard or cheetah), elephant, monkey, and ape give birth after three years, and corresponding to them among trees is the white figs (whose fruits are not developed until after three years). A viper can become fertile after seventy years, and corresponding to it among trees is the carob tree. From the time of the planting of the carob tree until the ripening of its fruit, a period of seventy years elapses; and the time of its 'gestation' (development) is three years (from when it blossoms until the produce is ripe). A snake gives birth after seven years, and for that wicked animal, there is no counterpart among trees. Some, however, say that corresponding to a snake is *mochsasim* (a kind of white fig). The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural source proving that a snake is pregnant for seven years. (8a – 8b)

Sages of Athens

Caesar once asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah: How long is the period of gestation and birth of a snake? He replied to him: Seven years. Caesar challenged him: But did not the Sages of Athens couple a male snake with a female, and they gave birth in three years? Rabbi Yehoshua replied: Those had already been pregnant for four years. Caesar asked: But did they not copulate during that time? Rabbi Yehoshua answered: Snakes copulate in the same manner as human beings (*and do so even when the female is pregnant*). Caesar asked: But aren't the sages of Athens wise men (*and surely they must have ascertained the true facts about the snake*)? Rabbi Yehoshua replied: We are wiser than them. If you are wise, said Caesar, go and defeat them in a debate, and bring them to me. He asked him: How many are they? Caesar told him that there are sixty of them. Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: Make me a ship containing sixty compartments, each compartment containing sixty seats. He did this for him.

When Rabbi Yehoshua reached their city, he went up to a butcher shop. He found a certain man who was skinning an animal. He asked him: Is your head for sale? The butcher replied: Yes. Rabbi Yehoshua asked him: For how much? The man answered: For a half a zuz. The butcher gave him the head, and Rabbi Yehoshua exclaimed: Did I say the head of an animal? (*I told you, 'your head'!*) Rabbi Yehoshua then said to him: If you wish that I should leave you alone, go in front of me and show me the door of the place of the Athenian sages. The man replied: I am afraid, for they kill whoever points them out. Rabbi Yehoshua then said: Take a bundle of reeds, and when you reach the spot, let it down as if to rest.

When Rabbi Yehoshua found the place, he found guards inside and guards outside; for when the sages saw somebody enter, they would kill the outside guards, and when they saw someone leaving, they killed the inside guards. He reversed his shoes (*to make a footprint which pointed outward*) and they killed the inside guards. He then reversed them (*to its normal position*) and they killed all of them (*the remaining outside guards*).

He proceeded and found the young men sitting above (*in the upper chamber*) and the elders below. He said: If I give greetings (*to the elders below*) first, then the young men will kill me, for they will claim that they are more important, for they sit above and the others below. And if I give greetings to the young men first, then the elders will kill me, for they will

claim that they are more important, for they are older. Rabbi Yehoshua then said (*without specifying who he was addressing*): Peace to you.

They asked him: What are you doing here? He replied to them: I am a sage of the Jews and I wish to learn wisdom from you. They replied: If so, we will ask you questions. Rabbi Yehoshua agreed, and stipulated as follows: If you defeat me, then whatever you wish, you can do to me, but if I defeat you, then you will eat bread with me in the ship.

They said to him: If a person wished to marry a woman and the consent was not given, why should he then seek a woman of higher status? [*If he was unable to obtain the woman of an inferior status, he certainly would not be able to secure the hand of a woman of a higher status?*] Rabbi Yehoshua took a peg and stuck it on the lower part of a stone wall, and it would not enter, and then he stuck it higher up, and it went in. He said: Here also therefore, it may happen that the second woman is his destined one.

They asked him: If a man lends money and is compelled to foreclose (*for the borrower did not pay him back*), is it to be expected that he should lend again? He replied to them: A man goes to a marsh, cuts the first bundle of reeds, but he cannot lift it. He continues cutting (*and places the next bundle on top of the first*) until somebody comes along and helps him to lift both bundles. [*Similarly, although he had difficulties with his first debtor, the second one might be more reliable, and he will recover his losses from before.*]

They said to him: Tell us some empty statements. He said to them: There was a mule which gave birth, and around its neck was a note in which was written: 'there is a claim against my father's house of one hundred thousand zuz.' They asked him: Can a mule give birth? He answered them: This is one of the empty statements.

They asked him: When salt becomes rancid, with what is it salted (*preserved*)? He replied: With the afterbirth of a mule. They objected: And is there an afterbirth of a mule? He replied: And can salt become rancid?

They told him: Build a house in the air. He pronounced the Name of Hashem, and he suspended himself in the air and hung between the sky and the earth. He then said to them: Bring me up bricks and mortar from down there. [*He told them: If you can't bring me the material, is it possible for me to build a house between heaven and earth?*]

They asked him: Where is the center of the world? He raised his fingers and pointed, and said to them: Here. They asked him: How can you prove it? He replied: Bring measuring ropes and measure for yourself.

They said: We have a well in the field. Bring it to the town. He replied: Spin ropes of bran flour for me and I will bring it in.

They said to him: We have a broken millstone. Stitch it (*so it will be repaired*). He replied: Take out the threads from the stone and I shall stitch it.

They asked him: A row of knives (*growing in a field*), how can we cut it? He answered them: With the horns of a donkey. They objected: But does a donkey have horns? He responded: And is there a row of knives?

They brought him two eggs, and asked him: Which is from the black hen and which is from the white one? He himself brought them two cheeses and asked them: Which is from a black goat and which is from a white one?

They asked him: A chicken dead in its shell, where has the spirit gone? He replied: From where it came, that is where it leaves.

They said to him: Show us a utensil whose value is not worth the loss it causes. He brought a mat of reeds and spread it out. It could not get through the door (*for it was too long and wide*). He then said: Bring pickaxes and demolish the door of the building. That is an example of a utensil whose value is not worth the loss it causes.

[*They admitted defeat.*] He brought them to eat in the ship, one by one to his separate cabin. When they saw the sixty seats, each one thought that all of their companions would come to this cabin. He ordered the head sailor to set sail. As they were about to journey, he took some earth from their (*native*) soil. When they reached the place where the water swallows all the other water, he filled a jug of water from there. When they arrived, they were presented to Caesar. He observed that they were meek (*and humble - being far from their native land*). He said: These are not them. Rabbi Yehoshua took some of the earth of their country and threw it on them. Thereupon, they grew haughty towards the emperor.

He then said to Rabbi Yehoshua: Whatever you desire, do with them. He fetched the water which he had taken from the waters that swallow and poured it into a barrel. He said to them: Fill this and depart on your way. They tried to fill it by casting water in it, one after the other, but it was absorbed. They went on filling until the joints of their shoulders became dislocated and they perished. (8b – 9a)